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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to secure the opinions of educators and practitioners as to how helpful advertising educators have been in the past, their potential for help in the future, and, based on this response, how they can be helpful. Members of the Advertising Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and of the American Academy of Advertising were selected as subjects for a survey of the nation's advertising education programs. In order to segment results, suggestions from educators and practitioners were ranked separately. The practitioner list contained two recommendations--the establishment of a research center at a university and summer internships for educators. The educator list contained three suggestions, including the two suggested by the practitioners, plus the utilization of the "Journal of Advertising" as a forum for solving problems in advertising education. (Author/RB)

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The Role of Advertising Educators as Problem Solvers in the Field of Advertising

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Paper presented to the Advertising Division
of the
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John Leckenby

ABSTRACT

In a recent study ["The Quality of Advertising Education Today", Journal of Advertising, Volume 2, Number 2, 1973.] the authors cited a lack of agreement among educators, practitioners, and advertising students on the proper content, value, and aims of advertising education. It was suggested that one significant result of this lack of consensus or failure of communication is the fact that the educators have not achieved the respect of, nor their rightful role of leadership in, the field of advertising.

Through this study, based upon a follow-up survey of leading practitioners and educators, an attempt was made to define specific problem areas and to determine which of them could most effectively be dealt with by educators. These problem areas were categorized as Functional issues, Social issues, and Regulatory issues. Having isolated existing problems, suggestions were sought for means of solving them in the future.

Thus the basic purpose of the study was to secure the opinions of educators and practitioners as to:

How helpful educators have been in the past;
Their potential for help in the future;
and, based upon this response,
How, specifically, they can be helpful.

Under each of the three areas educators indicated a belief that they had been helpful in the past to a greater degree than the practitioners were willing to admit. Similarly, the educators felt that they could be of more help in the future than did the practitioners. Among the practitioners there was no significant difference among the three areas as to the degree to which they felt educators had been helpful in the past. However the extent to which they believed educators could be helpful in the future was significantly higher in the Functional and the Social areas than in the Regulatory. There was a difference among educators as to their contributions in the past, with both Functional and Social areas being significantly higher than Regulatory. As to their future, help in the Social and Regulatory areas were rated about the same, with anticipated contributions in the Functional area being significantly higher than the other two.

An evaluation was made of specific ways educators could be most helpful in problem solving. In order to segment results, suggestions from educators and practitioners were ranked separately. The top segment on the practitioner list contained two suggestions: the establishment of a research center at a University and summer internships for educators. The top segment on the educator list contained three suggestions: the above-mentioned two appearing in the practitioners' top segment, plus the utilization of the Journal of Advertising as a forum for solving problems.

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Inherently advertising has high visibility. Its size, obtrusiveness, and pervasiveness form a base for its obvious characteristic of drawing attention to itself and, in so doing, of inviting criticism which more often than not is justly inspired by the entire profit system. The accelerating growth of such criticism, both in volume and in intensity, is to be expected and is, indeed, a matter of record. Advertising is a subject on which virtually everyone tends to form strong opinions.

Often overlooked, however, is the basic fact that advertising is an inanimate tool of communication which, like most tools, can be effective and beneficial or, when used incorrectly, can be inefficient or even harmful to society. Criticism abounds, but as Maurice Mandell points out, in order for the critic's evaluation to be relevant he must turn his attention from the inanimate tool to the animate creatures who use it. Mandell suggests four groups intimately associated with the process: advertising practitioners, users of advertising, carriers or media of advertising, and the advertising audience.[1] We propose the addition of a fifth group -- one in which Mandell himself is identified -- because of its actual or potential influence upon the other four. This group comprises advertising educators.

In a survey reported in the Journal of Advertising[2] the authors observed a lack of agreement among advertising educators, practitioners and students, as to the proper content, value and aim of advertising education. The implication followed that advertising educators have not achieved meaningful interaction with practitioners to resolve these differences and thereby have not assumed their full responsibility of leadership in the profession. This suggestion obviously was predicated upon the belief that educators have the capacity for and the responsibility of leadership in the field, thus raising the fundamental question of what, in actual fact, the role of advertising educators as problem solvers is; and, specifically, what problem areas can and should be dealt with by educators.

In an attempt to obtain explicit answers to these questions we have sought the opinions of educators and practitioners on the following points:

How helpful have educators been in the past?

What are their potentials for help in the future?

and, based upon this response,

How, specifically, can they be helpful?

THE RESPONDENTS

Members of the Advertising Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and those of the American Academy of Advertising were selected for survey representing the nation's advertising educational programs. The forty educators responding (n=40) represented an average total teaching experience of 14.4 years and an average advertising teaching experience of 13.2 years. Schools and colleges of journalism/communications were represented

by twenty-four of the educators; twelve taught in business/marketing and four in other university divisions. The average professional experience of the group was 10.4 years. As to their formal educational background, eighteen held doctor's degrees; seven, master's degrees; and four, bachelor's degrees. These degrees were earned in advertising (six); marketing (eight); journalism (six); mass communications (ten); and in other areas (nine).

The names of two hundred executives randomly selected from the roster of the American Association of Advertising Agencies made up the practitioners' list. Twenty-one responded, (n=21), including five agency board chairmen, seven agency presidents, and eight agency vice-presidents. Of this group twenty reported professional advertising experience, with an average of 23.4 years, and six reported professional public relations experience with an average of 23.3 years. Their formal education is indicated by the fact that two hold earned doctorates; three master's degrees; and twelve, bachelor's degrees. Three held no degree and one did not report. Of the academic degrees reported three were in advertising; three, in marketing; four,in journalism; and seven,in other areas.

One section of the questionnaire called for personal background data. This section was modified slightly between the two groups, i.e., educators and practitioners, so as to achieve a more accurate accommodation. With this exception the questionnaires were identical throughout the survey.

DEFINING PROBLEM AREAS

Respondents were asked to list existing problems relating to the field of advertising and to arrange them into problem areas in accordance with the

following statement:

> In order to facilitate your thinking about problems in the field of advertising today, it may be useful to think of categories of problems. Our categorization might concern Functional issues, Social issues, and Regulatory issues in advertising.
>
> Functional issues might be such aspects as the quality of advertising personnel, the role of research in creative functions, and other "everyday" working problems arising in the practice of advertising. Social issues might include more general problems such as misleading advertising and questions of ethics. Regulatory issues might concern such aspects as FCC rulings, legal matters, and other such elements concerning the practice of advertising.
>
> Please list below as briefly as possible three (3) problems in each of these three areas. List the problems according to their importance stating the problem you consider most important first and the one you consider least important last. Then please respond to questions "a" and "b" below each problem you have listed.
>
> A. Functional Issues in Advertising (for example, quality of advertising personnel)
>
> B. Social Issues in Advertising (for example, questions of ethics)
>
> C. Regulatory Issues in Advertising (for example, FCC rulings)

(a) Specific Problem Areas

Specific issues which were listed by the respondents as being of sufficient importance to require attention are listed in Table I categorized by each of the above issue areas. There are some interesting outcomes which should be examined. In the Social Issues area, the frequency of mention of social effects issues was indicated by practitioners about as often as ethics of practice. This is surprising yet encouraging; people in the field of advertising apparently do recognize the problems of promotion of steriotypical values and the promotion of certain social values in general. The lip service traditionally given to rather amorphous matters of ethics perhaps is being transformed into problems of a more specific nature (e.g., effects of

advertising on children) so that it becomes possible to focus concrete activities on the solution of such issues.

It is not reassuring to find that both practitioners and educators indicate recruitment and training of personnel as the greatest Functional Issue facing the field. Problems in the quality of personnel are mentioned almost as frequently. Educators have a responsibility in this area. Perhaps the concept of certification of practice needs to be reexamined.

Clearly, both groups view unrealistic regulations by government as a continuing problem. It may be that the answer to problems in the Regulatory area lies in solutions of the other two areas discussed here. This is no doubt recognized by educators and practitioners since of the problem areas facing the field of advertising as considered here, the Regulatory area was believed to be the least important as will be shown shortly.

TABLE Ia FUNCTIONAL ISSUES

Issue	% Practitioners	% Educators	% Total
Personnel Factors			
Recruitment and Training of Advertising Personnel	21.0	22.6	22.1
Quality of Advertising Personnel	14.0	7.0	9.1
Lack of Fundamental Knowledge of Advertising	12.2	3.1	5.9
Professionalism in Advertising	0	4.6	3.2
Management of Personnel	3.5	2.3	2.7
Quality of Advertising Educators	3.5	0	1.0
Total %	54.2	39.6	44.0
Research Factors			
General Problems in Advertising Research	0	7.0	4.8
Role of Research in Creativity	5.2	2.3	3.2
Role of Research in Decision Making	0	2.3	1.6
Total %	5.2	11.6	9.6
General Factors in Advertising Practice			
Advertising/Marketing Relationship	12.8	7.8	9.6
Quality of Advertisements	5.2	10.1	8.6
Measuring Effectiveness	7.0	6.2	6.4
Problems in Media Strategy	1.7	5.4	4.3
General Creative Problems	5.2	3.1	3.7
Understanding Consumer Behavior	0	4.6	3.2
Comparative Advertising	1.7	3.9	3.2
Substantiation of Claims	3.5	2.3	2.7
Setting of Advertising Objectives	0	3.1	2.1
Problems with Commission or Rate System	0	2.3	1.6
Client/Agency Relationship	3.5	0	1.0
Total %	40.6	48.8	46.4
Total Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total Number of Responses	57	128	185

TABLE Ib SOCIAL ISSUES

Issue	% Practitioners	% Educators	% Total
Ethics of Practice			
Truth in Advertising	15.7	15.3	15.4
Ethics	5.8	14.6	12.3
Misleading Advertising	10.5	11.2	11.0
Deceptive Advertising's Effect on all Advertising	5.2	6.1	5.8
Support of Immoral Vehicles and Products	5.2	6.1	5.8
Total %	42.4	53.3	50.3
Social Effects Factors			
Effects of Advertising on Social Values	28.9	10.2	15.4
Place of Advertising in Socio-Economic Complex	5.2	11.2	9.5
Effects of Advertising on Children	2.6	3.0	2.9
Promotion of Stereotypes	2.6	2.0	2.2
Total %	39.3	26.4	30.0
Economic Factors			
Economic Values	10.5	6.1	7.3
Consumerism in Advertising	0	10.2	7.3
Advertising and Free Enterprise	7.8	4.0	5.1
Total %	18.3	20.3	19.7
Total Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total Number of Responses	38	98	136

TABLE Ic REGULATORY ISSUES

Issue	% Practitioners	% Educators	% Total
Specific Regulatory Agencies			
Specific FTC Rulings	5.1	7.5	6.7
FTC Powers and Regulations	12.8	3.7	6.7
FCC Rulings	7.6	5.0	5.9
Extension of Fairness Doctrine	0	7.5	5.0
Total %	25.5	23.7	24.3
General Factors in Regulation			
Over-reaction of Regulators and Unrealistic Regulations	10.2	8.8	9.3
Understanding of Advertising's Role by Regulatory Bodies	5.1	8.8	7.6
Clear Codes and Regulations	5.1	8.8	7.6
Problems in Execution and Regulation of Local Advertising	7.6	6.3	6.7
Responsibility of Regulatory Agencies	7.6	5.0	5.9
Government Intervention in the Free Market System	2.5	6.3	5.0
Remedial/Counter/Corrective Advertising	0	7.5	5.0
Advertising by Public Utilities	2.5	2.5	2.5
Total %	40.6	54.0	49.6
Factors in Self-Regulation			
Self-Regulation	17.9	10.1	12.7
Legal Responsibility of Advertisers	10.9	7.3	8.4
Cooperation with Better Business Bureau	5.1	1.2	2.5
Strengthen NARB	0	3.7	2.5
Total %	33.9	22.3	26.1
Total Percent	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total Number of Responses	39	79	118

(b) Contribution of Educators

Following each suggested issue the respondent was asked to rank the contribution of educators on a five-place scale as follows:

a. Advertising educators in the past have been (not at all____; not too____; somewhat____; fairly____; very____;) helpful in working towards the solution of this problem.

b. Advertising educators in the future could be (not at all____; not too____; somewhat____; fairly____; very____;) helpful in working towards the solution of this problem.

Under each of the three areas educators indicated the belief that they had been helpful in the past to a greater degree than the practitioners were willing to admit. Similarly, they felt that they could be of more help in the future than was indicated by the practitioners. Significant differences of opinion ($p < .05$) occurred in the case of variables 1 and 6 as shown in Table II.

Among the practitioners there was no significant difference in the degree to which they felt educators had been helpful in the past in the three areas. However, the extent to which they felt educators could be helpful in the future was significantly higher ($p < .05$) in the Functional and Social areas than in the Regulatory.

There was a significant difference ($p < .05$) among educators as to their contribution in the past, with both the Functional and Social areas showing significantly higher than the Regulatory. As to the future, the Social and Regulatory areas among the educators were about the same, with the Functional being significantly higher than those two ($p < .05$).

TABLE II. CONTRIBUTION OF EDUCATORS

0 - not at all helpful

4 - very helpful

	VARIABLE	TOTAL SAMPLE N=61	PRACTITIONERS N=21	EDUCATORS N=40	t
1.	Functional: Educators helpful in the past?	1.70	1.29	1.92	1.96*
2.	Functional: Educators helpful in the future?	3.59	3.29	3.75	1.91
3.	Social: Educators helpful in the past?	1.59	1.43	1.67	.82
4.	Social: Educators helpful in the future?	3.07	2.86	3.18	.94
5.	Regulatory: Educators helpful in the past?	1.20	1.10	1.25	.46
6.	Regulatory: Educators helpful in the future?	2.89	2.38	3.15	2.09*

*$p < .05$

(c) Relative Importance of Problem Areas

Respondents were requested to rank the problem areas.

> Now that you have listed individual problems under each of these three problem areas, would you please evaluate the problem areas as a whole. Please rank the three problem areas as to their importance by placing "1", "2", or "3" in the space provided with "1" being the most important and "3" being the least important with respect to the impact of each of the problem areas on the progress of advertising as a whole.
>
> Functional Issues in Advertising____
>
> Social Issues in Advertising____
>
> Regulatory Issues in Advertising____

With regard to the ranking of the three issue areas, there were no significant differences of opinion between practitioners and educators. Within the educator group there existed no significant differences in ranking. The practitioners, on the other hand, ranked Functional and Social issues exactly equal and the Regulatory area significantly less important. This difference carried over into the total sample figure, bestowing a significant difference on the Social/Regulatory ranking.

TABLE III. RANKING OF PROBLEM AREAS

1 = most important
3 = least important

VARIABLE	TOTAL SAMPLE N = 61	PRACTITIONERS N = 21	EDUCATORS N = 40	t
Functional Ranking	1.72	1.48	1.85	1.57
Social Ranking	1.56	1.48	1.60	.50
Regulatory Ranking	1.97	2.10	1.90	.70

EDUCATORS' ROLE IN PROBLEM SOLVING

The respondent's attention was directed to nine specific suggestions as to means by which educators might approach the problems facing the advertising process in the future. The instructions were as follows:

Please complete the sentences below by checking the appropriate space.

1. Seminars held by educators for practitioners would be (not at all___; not too___; somewhat___; fairly___; very___;) helpful in solving problems facing the advertising field.

2. For the American Academy of Advertising to work as a group on a problem would be (not at all___; not too___; somewhat___; fairly___; very___;) helpful in solving problems facing the advertising field.

3. Summer internships for educators on agency work would be (not at all___; not too___; somewhat___; fairly___; very___;) helpful in solving problems facing the advertising field.

4. The establishment of a pool of academic consultants would be (not at all___; not too___; somewhat___; fairly___; very___;) helpful in solving problems facing the advertising field.

5. The establishment of an advertising research center at a major university would be (not at all___; not too___; somewhat___; fairly___; very___;) helpful in solving problems facing the advertising field.

6. The establishment of an advertising research center through the American Academy of Advertising would be (not at all___; not too___; somewhat___; fairly___; very___;) helpful in solving problems facing the advertising field.

7. Treatment by the Journal of Advertising of issues obtained by a survey of practitioners would be (not at all___; not too___; somewhat___; fairly___; very___;) helpful in solving problems facing the advertising field.

8. The development of a formal tie,in addition to the 4A Educational Foundation, between the AAA (American Academy of Advertising) and the AAAA would be (not at all___; not too___; somewhat___; fairly___; very___;) helpful in solving problems facing the advertising field.

9. The establishment of a public education speaker's program sponsored by the American Academy of Advertising would be (not at all___; not too___; somewhat___; fairly___; very___;) helpful in solving problems facing the advertising field.

10. Finally, please list below other means by which educators could contribute to the formulation of solutions for the problems you have indicated above.

In an effort to segment results, educator and practitioner results were ranked separately. Following this, significant differences in figures were sought. In neither list is there a case where a significant difference exists between a result and the next lower result. Segmentation occurs only when the highest result is compared with each succeeding lower result until there is a significant difference. This process was repeated, starting from the bottom. Thus each list can be divided into three segments with the top segment being the suggestions thought most helpful and the bottom segment being the least helpful.

As shown in Table IV, the top segment on the practitioner list contains two suggestions: establishment of a research center at a university and summer internships for educators. The top segment on the educator list contains three suggestions: the same two as the practitioner top segment plus the utilization of the Journal of Advertising to treat problems.

The bottom segment on the practitioner list is the larger, having four suggestions: public speakers program by the AAA, Journal of Advertising to treat problems, seminars given by educators, and a pool of academic consultants. Two of these suggestions, the pool of academic consultants and the public speakers program, comprise the bottom segment of the educator list. The middle segments on both lists are strikingly similar.

TABLE IVa POTENTIAL AIDS IN PROBLEM SOLVING BY EDUCATORS

Ranking of Suggestions from Educators

0 - not at all helpful

4 - very helpful

VARIABLE	
Summer Internships for Educators	2.97[a]
Advertising Research Center at a University	2.72
Journal of Advertising to Treat Problems	2.65
Seminars given by Educators	2.47
Formal Tie: AAA and AAAA	2.45
Research Center through AAA	2.42
AAA Working on a Problem	2.40
Pool of Academic Consultants	2.15
Public Speaker's Program by AAA	2.05[b]

Notes:

a. Significant difference between "Summer Internships for Educators" and "Seminars given by Educators", ($t=2.33$, $p < .05$).

b. Significant difference between "Public Speaker's Program by AAA" and "AAA Working on a Problem", ($t=2.16$, $p < .05$).

TABLE IVb POTENTIAL AIDS IN PROBLEM SOLVING BY EDUCATORS

Ranking of Suggestions from Practitioners

0 = not at all helpful

4 = very helpful

VARIABLE	
Advertising Research at a University	2.95[a]
Summer Internships for Educators	2.57
Research Center through AAA	2.48
AAA Working on a Problem	2.33
Formal Tie: AAA and AAAA	2.29
Public Speaker's Program by AAA	2.14
Journal of Advertising to Treat Problems	2.10
Seminars given by Educators	1.76
Pool of Academic Consultants	1.62[b]

Notes:

a. Significant difference between "Advertising Research at a University" and "Research Center through AAA", ($t=2.02$, $p<.05$).

b. Significant difference between "Pool of Academic Consultants" and "Formal Tie: AAA and AAAA", ($t=2.09$, $p<.05$).

COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

The sample used for analysis in this study was admittedly small. A mailing to two hundred educators and two hundred practitioners produced a 20% response from the educators (n=40) and a 15.5% response from the practitioners (n=21), for a total response of 15.25% (n=61). Several reasons for this disappointing return come to mind, perhaps the most evident being the length and comprehensiveness of the questionnaire. It would be reasonable to assert that the individuals surveyed share at least two common characteristics: they must overcome unusually heavy demands upon their time, and they tend to be overly subjected to surveys.

Nevertheless, it is maintained that several valuable indications become manifest in the collected data. A review of Table IV discloses two suggestions for the future, conspiciously pointed out by the entire sample as being significant:

(1) the establishment of an advertising research center at a major university; and

(2) summer internships for educators on agency work.

For at least two decades, Professor Charles Sandage has advocated the establishment of research centers. In 1968 he said:

> Advertising education must more and more concern itself with research. This will require the combined efforts of educators and practitioners. Progress in this area could be hastened if research by practitioners were to be pooled and made available to analysts and theoreticians and made part of the public domain. Much good could come also from the establishment of university-based research centers, perhaps operated on a cooperative basis. 3

With the recognition on the part of both practitioners and educators of the importance of this development, it is suggested that positive action is indicated.

The more widespread establishment of professional internships for educators is highlighted throughout the data. Typical suggestions from both practitioners and educators are "self-renewal","on-going education," and "sensitivity to current professional demands". Here again, consensus indicates a renewed effort to overcome the obstacles to the establishment of a widespread, vital internship program.

It is interesting to find that of the two most frequently mentioned problem solving aids for both samples, one requires action by educators (university research center) and the other action by practitioners (academic internships). This clearly illustrates the need for cooperation on the part of academicians and practitioners. Educators alone will not be able to solve the problems defined in this study. For their part, the practitioners have initiated internships in the Mid West; these need to be expanded in scope and geography. Educators, on the other hand, have not even begun work on a problem solving aid which is clearly in their province. Efforts should be undertaken in cooperation with the 3A's and the Advertising Division of AEJ to initiate development of a university research center as Professor Sandage suggested some time ago. Educators clearly have the responsibility to contribute to the development of the field of advertising in this particular form.

Furthermore, the issues as defined in this study of advertising problems suggest the areas in which such a research center would most appropriately concentrate its efforts. The combined results of practitioners and academicians show the Social area to be the most troublesome of the three categories of problem areas. Within this major area, the perennial problem of misleading advertising and related topics in relation to <u>social effects</u> of such

advertising was most often cited as an important source of difficulty in the field. Sound empirical inquiry is required here; the concerted effort of a major university research center may find solutions to specific problems in this area whereas isolated individual work by professors may not.

Footnotes

1. Maurice Mandell. Advertising. 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1974. p.61.

2. Frazier Moore and John Leckenby. "The Quality of Advertising Education Today." Journal of Advertising, Vol 2, No. 2 (1973). pp 6-10.

3. C. H. Sandage, "Some Observations About Advertising Education" in Hugh W. Sargent, ed. Frontiers of Advertising Theory and Research. Palo Alto, California: Pacific Books, Publisher, 1972. p.162.